# BULLETIN
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# BULLETIN OF THE CHICAGO HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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**Cover:** A calling male gray treefrog, *Hyla versicolor* or *H. chrysoscelis*, from Cook County, Illinois. Photograph by Stephen L. Barten, D.V.M.


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*The editor wishes to thank Professor Harry Greene of Cornell University for suggesting that we reprint the following prophetic and beautifully written but little known article. It originally appeared in 1938, in Volume 1, Number 4, of* The Chicago Naturalist*, a publication distributed at that time to members of the Chicago Academy of Sciences. The editor also thanks Kathryn Gloyd for approving this endeavor and Mary Hennen of the Chicago Academy of Sciences for supplying on loan a copy of the original.*

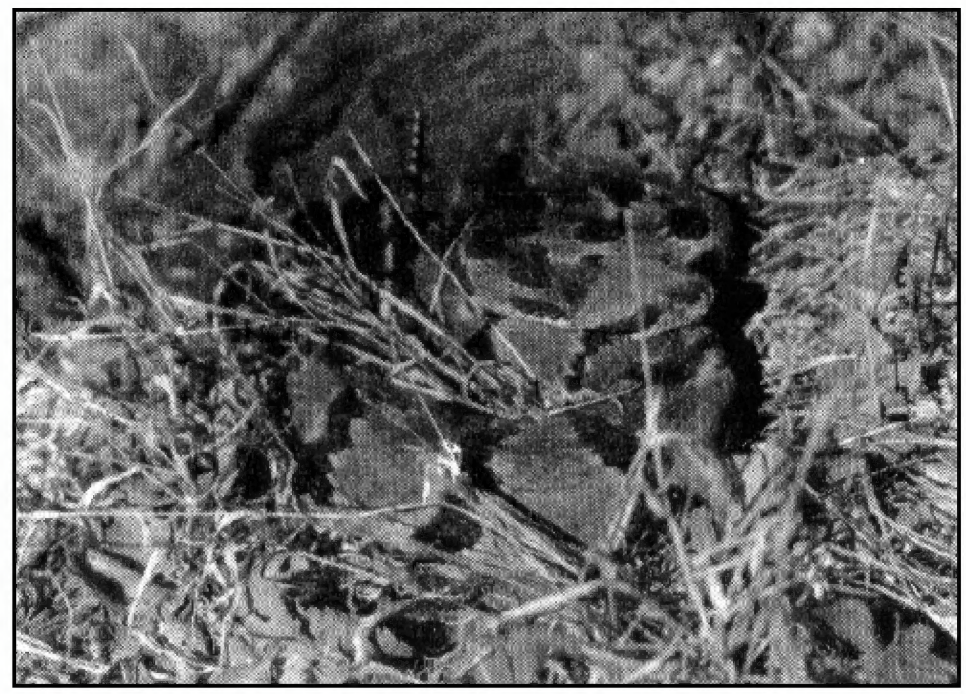
# The Snakes of Goose Pond Hill

**Howard K. Gloyd**

A high ridge covered with hardwood timber and dense undergrowth, with a cypress swamp at the foot of its western slope, Goose Pond Hill in southeastern Missouri owes its somewhat questionable renown to the presence of considerable numbers of cane brake rattlesnakes, copperheads and cotton-mouth moccasins which, together with several kinds of non-venomous species, find winter shelter among the depths of its ledges. Philip D. Evans, a competent amateur herpetologist, until recently of St. Louis, was led to visit it a few years ago by an account in a small-town newspaper of the killing of great numbers of snakes on the hill each spring and fall. The general region is of interest because it is one of the northern limits of a number of species typically southern in distribution. During the warm months these reptiles spread into the lowlands, the water snakes into the nearby swamp. Successful collecting on the hill must be nicely timed to coincide with the snakes' exodus from the ledges in the spring or their return to hibernating quarters in the fall.

Each year, for almost the last ten, Evans and I had planned, on paper, a snake-hunting excursion among the rocky bluffs of southern Illinois and southeastern Missouri only to have to abandon it at the last moment. This year, however, two short trips were made with the object of collecting specimens and making motion pictures in this interesting area. The first was in early June, too late to find snakes near the hibernating dens, but the second was at a more fortunate time during the first week of October. A somewhat unusual continuance of warm weather had delayed the snakes' return to the rocks, but a few had already taken up positions in the crevices and others were found apparently on the way up.

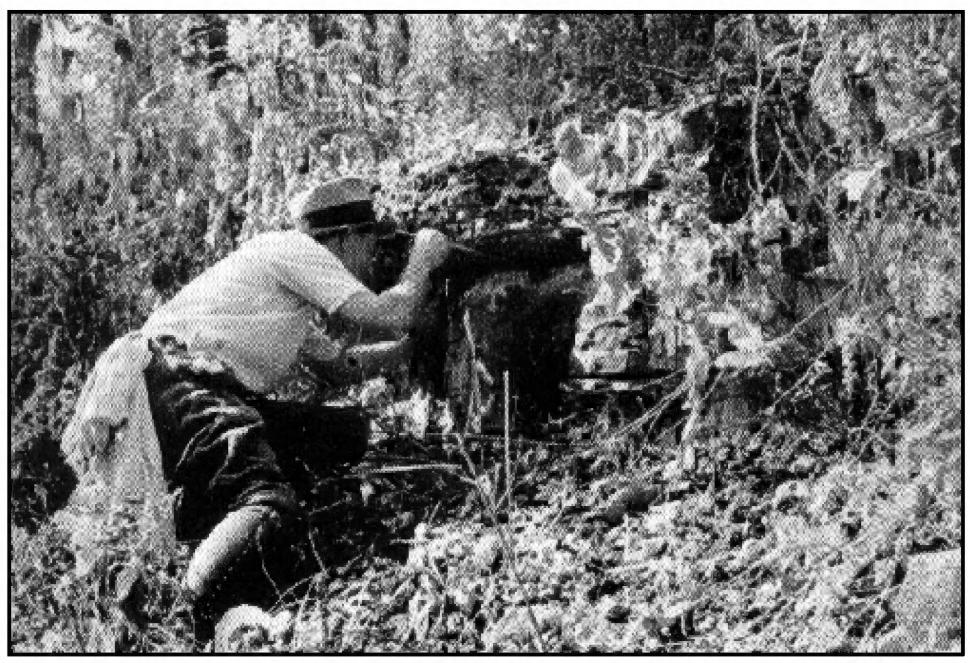
One very large rattlesnake, larger than any either of us had ever caught before, was discovered beneath the end of a once-great log. It was captured not exactly with ease but, being in



the open. presented no special difficulties. It bears a scar which Evans suspects may have been caused by his brass hook when two years ago he attempted, unsuccessfully, to remove a snake of similar size from the "upper den." Exploring the crevices with the aid of flashlights, we found several others, all out of reach of our hooks or in a position to wedge themselves too tightly for capture without mutilation.

No copperheads were seen, but several cottonmouths were found in the open, either on the hill or in the nearly dry bed of the swamp below. One made its capture easy by voluntarily coming out of a crevice to resent molestation! Pilot black snakes and blue racers, as well as several other cottonmouths, were seen far back in deep crevices from which they could not be extracted.

The last remnants of the cypress swamps once extensive in that region are now being drained, all the useable timber seems



to have been cut, and the reptiles dependent upon such a habitat are likely to disappear from the area within a short time. Even now Evans notes a decrease in the abundance of these animals much below that of only a few years ago. At the time of our last visit new farm buildings were under construction at the edge of the former swamp within pistol shot of the hill, small fields of corn stood ready for harvesting, and a path formerly difficult for foot traffic had been made passable by automobile.

Soon the "grim castanets" of Old Horridus will no longer sound on Goose Pond Hill; he who in haughty dignity ruled the rocks these many centuries, asking but "to lie, untrodden, in the sun," can not survive when man is near; he whose grandfathers, and their fathers' fathers, once held sway throughout a wide domain must accept his fate, and follow his ancestral cohorts into the forever-and-ever land.

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# Century-old Article about Raymond Ditmars Revisited

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Thirty years ago my interest in herpetology began with the purchase of a couple of hatchling red-eared sliders and the capture of a garter snake in my neighbor's backyard. Just like most of you, to learn more about these creatures, I perused the books at our local library. I remember being impressed by the color plates of baby turtles in Roger Conant's field guide and the thickness of Archie Carr's turtle handbook. Perhaps because we shared the same first name, I certainly took notice of all of the works on the shelves by Raymond L. Ditmars, although at the time I didn't realize that the Bronx Zoo's famed curator of reptiles had passed away more than 25 years before.

Oddly enough, the following year, one of my first subjects as a freshman in high school was Raymond Ditmars. Our English 9 textbook, *Insights: Themes in Literature*, was an anthology and included a chapter from Ditmars' 1933 book, *Thrills of a Naturalist Quest*, titled "The Episode of the Bushmaster." Very early that fall our teacher, Mrs. Rosemary Taylor, spent a few days analyzing the piece with us. Because my classmate Jane Rider, with whom I had attended eight years of elementary school, brought my interest in herpetology to Mrs. Taylor's attention, I gave the first of what would eventually be many high school snake talks. Also, in our school library, I discovered a copy of Laura Newbold Wood's biography, *Raymond L. Ditmars: His Exciting Career with Reptiles, Animals, and Insects*, which helped me learn a great deal more about this remarkable man.

In the years since, I've never really stopped thinking about Ditmars. In college, even when I couldn't afford it, I acquired an autographed copy of his *Thrills*. One professor I had insisted we use pseudonyms on our tests to help to eliminate bias on his part; of course, I used the name Ditmars. During my first trip to New York City, a primary destination was the Bronx Zoo's Reptile House, "the house that Ditmars built" (or at least filled). In the past decade, I've since assembled a collection of his books that would surpass almost any library. Early in the coming new millennium, I hope to travel to New York City again to dig in the zoo archives and visit his grave.

While flipping through the Wood biography again several years ago, I reread a passage discussing Raymond Ditmars' first "public appearance." Making it even more intriguing was the fact that it happened just a few months short of 100 years before.

Though serpents were his main interest, at the age of 17 he had obtained a position in the entomology department at the American Museum of Natural History. Kate Swan, a feature writer at the *New York World*, a "thrice weekly" newspaper at that period of its existence, was visiting the museum in preparation for an article. The two were introduced and Ms. Swan quickly made plans for a story about Ditmars and his burgeoning snake collection. The resulting story marked the beginning of the highly public life of Raymond Ditmars whose name, from then until years after his death in 1942, was synonymous with snakes.

In her book Laura Wood describes the article in detail, especially the accompanying illustration created by a newspaper artist who had not met Ditmars:

> Never in a lifetime full of snakes had he seen so many in one picture. By actual count there were twenty-three. A figure which Ray recognized as fanciful representation of Raymond L. Ditmars occupied the center of the picture. From the floor around, cobras, hoods spread, reared. Two large pythons closely girdled the central figure, while copperheads and moccasins in startling profusion emerged from his pockets, and a couple of things Ray thought were anacondas ascended his legs. On one outstretched hand there rested the head of an immense boa constrictor. The other hand was recklessly engaged in brandishing a diamond back rattler. . . . (Wood, 1944, p. 93)

The desire to see this article and drawing with my own eyes led to an almost three-year-long search, just recently realized.

I began with the standard and usually reliable technique, interlibrary loan. However, because I lacked the exact page number of the citation my request went unfilled. Surprisingly, Steven Johnson, archivist at the Wildlife Conservation Center in the Bronx could not locate it in the zoo's collection either. Requests for assistance on the Internet's herp-related usenet

groups went unanswered. But then, a discovery that the New York Public Library had an on-line research service looked promising. I sent my request and credit card number to the "NYPL Express" and waited. About two weeks later an envelope arrived. Opening it with eagerness, I was disappointed to read that the service had checked the requested newspaper for the date I had given them, Sunday, February 11, 1897, but had found no article about Ditmars. They added that the date I had given them was not a Sunday, but rather a Thursday.

I checked page 93 of the Wood text again and confirmed that February 11 was the one she had recorded. Hmmm. The closest Sunday to the 11th in 1897 would be the 14th and those two numbers were close enough in appearance to suggest a typographical error was possible.

So with this hunch I contacted the NYPL Express again with my credit card close by. I had spent almost $100 and promised myself that this would be the last time, though, until I could actually do the research myself in New York City. The envelope that arrived a few weeks later looked suspiciously as thin as the first one. So anticipating the worst, I opened it to read a headline: "Venomous Snakes Are His Pets." The elusive article had been found!

This July 17 marks the 100th anniversary of (just barely) 23-year-old Raymond Lee Ditmars beginning his job of assistant curator of reptiles at the New York Zoological Park (Wood, 1944; Bridges, 1974). Swan's article a few years earlier provided notoriety, important contacts, and positive reinforcement to an even younger Ditmars and perhaps in some way helped lead to his life long position. Because both the copyright and the *New York World* expired many years ago, the somewhat lurid article is now part of the public domain and is reprinted below in its entirety, with my annotations. I'd like to thank my colleague Julie Futey Peterson, our park district's graphic artist, for cleaning up the illustration. She made my photocopy of a scratched-up microfilm image look about 100 years younger!

==========

**THE WORLD: SUNDAY FEBRUARY 14, 1897**
**THE MASTER OF SERPENTS BEARDED[1] IN HIS DEN**
**BY KATE SWAN**

If fifty men were confined in a upper room of a certain house in Fordham[2] and the master of the room released his pet rattlesnakes, moccasins and deadly copperheads, at the end of an hour all the men would have suffered a horrible death, while the poisonous reptiles would be robbed of their venom and busy laying up the new stock.

Still, sufficient poison would remain clinging to their fans to rob ten men of an arm or a leg each, and also to make a number of other men very sick for a few days.

Yet Prof. R. L. Ditmars, the master of all these possibilities

PROF. R. L. DITMARS, CURATOR OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AND HIS CRAWLY PLAYTHINGS.

of death, handles them as deftly as if there wasn't a drop of poison in their ugly, flat heads, while cold chills of admiration travel from my head to heels at the sight.

Mr. Ditmars is the most interesting authority on snakes in

1. To confront and oppose with boldness, resolution, and often effrontery: DEFY (Webster's, 1988, p. 137).
2. Now part of the Bronx borough and home to a university, Fordham was formerly a village (Webster's, 1994).

New York at this time, because, just as Tesla[3] can't help being an electrical wizard, so Ditmars is apparently bound to preside over the serpent tribe.

Personally he is interesting because he looks like a boy, and the wonder is how he ever managed to acquire so intimate an acquaintance with snakes while still so young. But his youth, it seems, doesn't count. Mr. Ditmars is assistant curator[4] of the department of entomology at the Museum of Natural History, and he and his collection of snakes are held in high esteem.

When the Snake Prince was a small boy he cried for snakes. As he grew up he insisted on having them for pets and when he was only eight years old he was already seriously studying small snakes. From that time they have received the greater part of his attention until now he has the largest and finest collection of poisonous snakes in or about New York.

When his family learned that the snakes were to be treated seriously the boy's mother very wisely submitted, and five years ago gave up an entire room in her home to the serpents.

"You must not tell the address, because if some of the people about here knew the contents of this room they would never sleep again," said Mr. Ditmars. "You may see them, but you mustn't tell the location[5]."

## IN THE SNAKES DEN

"Walk in." said the Master of Snakes. One side of the room was given up to the residences of many snakes. A frieze[6] of immense snake skins of various kinds, including one of a venomous cobra five feet long, extended about the room, and wherever there was space more snake skins were displayed, while mounted serpent skulls or jars containing rattlesnakes or cobra heads were hung here and there.

In one corner is a large cage, the glass in the front of which is broken.

"There" said the Snake Master, pointing to a black mass, out of which raised a lazy head, "is the biggest water moccasin I know of in captivity." There was an accent of pride in the voice that couldn't have been surpassed by the owner of a Murillo[7].

My big boa constrictor had been in that cage. He broke the glass. He had just arrived from Trinidad, and the voyage, I'm sure, killed him, for he was sick when he got here. I gave him a quart of kerosene oil[8], and he died yesterday. He was twelve feet long. These moccasins came from Florida. Of course you know their bite is deadly poison. I take this big fellow down to the city as one of the exhibits in the lectures[9] I deliver in the Board of Education course. Handle them? Of course I do.

"Here is a handsome garter snake." he said, calmly taking it from a cage and putting it in my hand. Then he picked out another one that hides all the bright color on the part it crawls upon.

"That's just like snakes," Mr. Ditmar (sic) explains. "Most of them are prettiest on the under portion."

Meantime the snake he has given me twists and winds its way around my hands and arms. It has a cunning little trick of trying to climb up inside my sleeve and hides its head among the lace about my wrists whenever it is brought back from an attempted excursion up my sleeve.

Then he twists himself in a knot on my lap and I stroke and pet his back near the head until he ceases his restless movements and lies quite still.

"He likes that," Mr. Ditmars said, "or he never would be still. You like the constrictors? There is a beauty. It came from Trinidad and is as tame as a kitten." He lays it in a beautiful reddish coil in my hand, and it too, seems very fond of petting.

"But here," he said, "is one that was born in captivity, and has never yet lost its wildness."

Putting back the snakes we have been playing with he goes to a small box. In it is a tiny head crested above a couple of coils. It isn't a bit bigger than a gold serpent bracelet, but the instant the glass is slid from the front of its box and the light held up it make a vicious strike and hits the glass that Mr. Ditmars has shot back quickly. Once more the tiny head is erected and darted like lightning at the glass.

"Is it dangerous?" I ask.

That is a small copperhead, the most poisonous snake about

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3. Nicola Tesla (1856–1943) was a Croatian born electrical engineer and inventor with more than 100 patents to his name. A celebrity known worldwide, among his scientific achievements was his illumination of the grounds and buildings at the 1893 World Fair in Chicago (Dictionary of American Biography, 1973).

4. More than likely, his position could be expressed more accurately as assistant to the curator, Dr. William Beutenmuller.

5. According to Wood (1944, p.71) the Ditmars family had moved to 1666 Bathgate Avenue in the Bronx in 1896, the year before this article was written.

6. A sculptured or richly ornamented band (as on a building) (Webster's, 1988, p. 493).

7. Bartolome Esteban Murillo (1617/18–1682) was considered to be Spain's finest painter of the late Baroque period (Taggard, 1992). Although his stature declined considerably during the next 200 years (Curtis, 1883) his work was eagerly sought by 19th century collectors (Brown, 1976).

8. According to my colleague, Donald Allen, D.V.M. (pers. com., June 1, 1999), many 19th century veterinary practices would be considered inhumane today; he suggested that perhaps Ditmars used kerosene as a "purgative" (cathartic medicine) in the hope of eliminating parasites from the snake. Roger Conant, who knew Ditmars well in the 1920s–1940s, doesn't believe Ditmars would have administered this ghastly treatment, stating that Ditmars "would have known better" (pers. com., June 21, 1999).

9. For the rest of his life Ditmars delivered public lectures to supplement his income. Unfortunately, his years of lecturing led to chronic throat problems. During the winter of 1942 these worsened into bronchitis and finally pneumonia, the cause of his death May 12, 1942 (Wood, 1944).

here, and when that small creature was only two hours and a half old it had enough poison in its fangs to kill a man."

There are snakes, snakes, snakes—corn snakes, pine snakes, hog-nose snakes and ribbon snakes that fly about like bits of twisting wire. In one cage is an exquisitely dimpled and dotted bit of coloring in greens that came from the everglades of Florida. With it is another green beauty that came from the Mojave Desert and never saw water. There is a baby black-snake too. Mr. Ditmars takes them out and plays with them and tells wonderful stories about their habits—things that he has studied and learned, many of them, by long hours spent in front of these cages.

## DEADLY RATTLESNAKES

"The harmless snakes are all right, but the poisonous ones are the most important and interesting to me. See those diamond-back rattlers?" he said, pointing to a cage in which a couple of handsomely marked creatures are coiled up.

"They are the most poisonous rattlers. I take those two down to the lectures and they are the star actors. That big rattler could kill six men in an hour. At the end of that time his supply of venom would be exhausted, but he would soon lay up more. Would you like to see his big fangs?"

Then Mr. Ditmars opens the glass from of the cage, catches the head of the rattler with a hooked stick and by a swift movement that is almost rapid enough to be legerdemain[10] his hand catches the dread snake above neck close to the head and swings it out into the room. The rattler writhes about, but he can't wind about his master's arm. Mr. Ditmars thrusts a pencil between the widely gaping jaws and picks up, so I can see them, the pointed fangs through which the poison is injected.

Finally he thrusts the rattler back with the head carefully from him, lets go the head and draws his hand back like an arrow. The snake turns to strike, but the hand is gone.

## SEEKING ANTI-VENOM

In another cage is a motionless black coil. Mr. Ditmars opens the cage, thrusts a stick at the black snake and then comes that awful sound that always paralyzes the blood of any one who hears it. "That's a musical rattler, isn't he?" the master asks; but rattlers and music are not associated in my mind. The serpent has a wicked expression as he continues rattling.

Mr. Ditmars takes them out for me and shows me fangs until it doesn't take a vivid imagination to think of possible results if the master's grip should fail.

Venom is now being collected from these venomous snakes for important experiments. Mr. Ditmars catches them by the neck and holds them while they strike at a stick, and the poison exuding from the fangs is caught in a bottle.

In six months of injection of this poison a horse becomes proof against snake bites. Then it is expected the serum can be used as an anti-venom.

Skinning a boa constrictor isn't as dainty as fancy work[11], but I was allowed to help skin the twelve-foot dead fellow that had occupied the big cage.

"I've tried repeatedly to feel the fascination of snakes," says the Snake Master. "I've sat here with a big rattlesnake watching me with a horrible look on its face, but never have I been able to experience the supposed fascination or charming."

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10. Sleight of hand; a display of skill or adroitness (Webster's, 1988, p. 682).

11. Decorative needlework (Webster's, 1988, p. 448).

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# A Night at the Frog Opera

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It rained heavily two nights ago, and last night was warm and humid. In late May or early June these conditions trigger the treefrog breeding chorus. There is something magical about standing in the middle of a frog chorus at night. It's incredibly loud, if nothing else. But there is something more—a sense of nature's rhythms and cycles proceeding as they have for eons, in spite of the havoc mankind has wreaked upon the environment. Witnessing that burst of activity somehow affirms that things are all right with the world, or could be. Standing in the middle of the chorus is calming and invigorating at the same time; I find it strangely therapeutic. My long-suffering spouse knows that sooner or later I will announce, "I think I'll go look for treefrogs after it gets dark tonight."

I know where a breeding pond of gray treefrogs lies a few miles from my house. I don't remember when I originally found it, but driving slowly down the road with my windows open on balmy spring night about 15 years ago, I heard a cacophony of frogs calling. I knew right away that it was a chorus of frogs. At the same time I recognized the calls as different from those of chorus frogs, which sound like the clicks you get when you run your thumb down the teeth of a comb. The calls were also lower pitched and slower than the whistling trill of American toads. Both chorus frogs and toads seem to populate every ditch and standing body of water and I know their calls well. Treefrogs, however, are much more spotty in distribution. That I heard frogs wasn't surprising or unusual; what caught my attention was that these were different.

Stopping the car, I found a shallow pond behind a wall of trees and shrubs. The site hasn't changed since I first stumbled across it. The pond side of the street is the back side of a forest preserve, while the other side is made up of private houses with large, wooded yards. Technically, I suppose the public isn't supposed to enter the forest preserve where there is no parking lot, path or official entrance. Likewise, I suspect the preserve is considered closed after dark. Nevertheless, I don't know how you see the treefrogs unless you trespass after dark. I parked on a side street, entered the woods and waded into the pond. After 15 patient minutes I located and identified one of the callers as a gray treefrog. Since that night I have visited the chorus every few years, just to make sure it's still there.

It is ironic that in high school my buddy and I often cruised this same road on summer nights when we were bored and looking for adventure. We cruised up and down next to the forest preserve looking not for herps, but for moths. We would see their reflective eye shine in the headlights, or the moths themselves fluttering above the road. Big sphinx or hawk moths were most common, but we saw occasional luna moths as well. If we heard frogs at the time, we didn't appreciate them for what they were.

Last night I noted two differences from my last visit to the site about five years ago. First, there was a tremendous glare off the cloud ceiling from new streetlights on a busy road a mile away. These lit up the night so well a flashlight was unnecessary to walk, only to spot individual frogs. Second, the pond was becoming overgrown by cattails and other grasses. Even what used to be an open center where it was three feet deep now had a low, sparse growth of grasses. The cattails were thick but passable. I later discovered that some of the grasses were the kind with sharp edges that abrade the skin as you walk past. Airplanes on a flight path to O'Hare roared overhead every few minutes.

I used my flashlight sparingly as I waded into the pond, both because the overhead glare made its use redundant and because of concern over attracting the attention of a passing car, even though I was screened by a row of shrubs and trees. The thing I did right was to wear my scuba diving booties, negating the problem that calling frogs are usually found in water about two inches deeper than the height of the rubber boots I normally wear to keep my feet dry. It was well I did, as I ended up entering water well above my knees. The thing I did wrong was to forget insect repellent. At first I thought, "How bad can they be?" Soon I was rationalizing, "I'm here and it's too far to go back for the repellent." The mosquitoes positively swarmed. I brushed my arm and felt the four tiny bodies I crushed. I brushed my other arm, killing several more, then more on my right leg, then left, then neck, then face. That took three or four seconds. Then I had to repeat the cycle, again and again. I felt like a third base coach in baseball sending a signal to the batter. They flew up my nose and into my mouth. This morning I have 75 to 100 bites on each arm and leg. Fortunately I'm not very sensitive to mosquito bites. These are the things we put up with to do the things we love to do.

To stand in a pond surrounded by calling frogs is a wonderful experience, bugs notwithstanding. The place was alive with life, deafening with sound. The majority of calls were from gray treefrogs, with a musical, "laughing," somewhat nasal trill. There were two green frogs giving occasional grunts like a plucked banjo string, and somewhere nearby in the reeds was a solitary bullfrog, with a low, sonorous note like a bow being drawn over the strings of a bull fiddle.

It takes concentration to focus on a single frog out of the chorus in order to locate it. I was homing in on the first one when I heard something crashing through the brush towards me. My light was off. This thing was big, probably a person. Was it a neighbor, investigating the parked car and on again, off again flashlight? Was it a ranger? Was it another herper? It came straight towards me, as if it knew right where I was in the dark. It had no light, and made an inordinate amount of noise. Crash, crash. Closer, closer. I thought, "You know, if this is an animal, it's a big one, bigger than a raccoon." I saw

This gray treefrog, *Hyla versicolor* or *Hyla chrysoscelis*, was calling from a reed above the water line. It was light gray with dark gray blotches when calling.

A second gray treefrog from the same population on a different night was calling from the surface of the pond. It showed another extreme in the range of colors these frogs can assume. It was plain, light green without blotches at the time.

the cattails begin to part and turned on my flashlight. Here came a doe, a deer, a female deer. She was six feet away—I almost could have touched her. She was completely unaware of my presence before my light came on, and assumed (imagine this) that vacant deer-in-the-headlights stare in the light. She kept to her path, walking right past me, unhurried, as if I wasn't there, and disappeared into the reeds. I remained still until she had passed.

My racing heart began to slow. My target frog was thoroughly disturbed and had stopped calling. I scanned the surface of the water to no avail. All I found were several of the common chorus frogs clinging to the reeds just above the water line, newly transformed and still with half a tail. The adults of this species are barely an inch long; you could have fit three of these new froglets on a dime.

Another treefrog called nearby. I started threading my way through the reeds and shin-deep water towards it, the light once again turned off. Suddenly, next to my right elbow came a loud "SQUAWK!" I jumped, startled. Then again, "squawk!" My light revealed a red-winged blackbird nest right next to me, with a female sitting on young, a female who resented being disturbed in the middle of the night.

This pond was just too busy. I decided to wade across to the other side, from which a greater number of treefrogs was calling. I focused on an individual loud one, and moved closer. I paused, waiting for another call, then moved closer again. After a dozen calls I was right on top of him. The first frog is the hardest to find, as one has to develop a search pattern. Sometimes treefrogs call from the surface of the water, and sometimes from reeds a foot or two above the water. You generally see the light reflect off their shiny skin or inflating throat pouch. I parted the reeds, looked down, and there he was on the surface: a bright green frog with dark green camouflage blotches and a puffy throat pouch, less than two inches long. I looked in vain for a satellite male. Apparently calling perch location is critical when attracting a female gray treefrog. Calling males defend their territory from competitors. Subordinate males will hide nearby, silently biding their time, then move in and take over the perch if the first male succeeds in attracting a mate and departs to breed.

I continued my search. One frog was frustrating me, obviously nearby but invisible. Finally I saw movement on a reed 18 inches above the water, just below another red-wing nest. The frogs were calling both from the surface and from higher in the reeds. Because I was focusing on the surface after finding the first one there, I initially missed this one higher up. The female red-wing loudly announced that I was too close and once again I beat a hasty retreat to avoid disturbing her. Sweeping my flashlight back and forth across the pond surface I saw several pairs of treefrogs in amplexus, the males smaller than the females.

These little frogs fit the human criteria for being cute: they are pleasingly plump, with a permanent half smile and big toe pads. They are brightly colored but can change color: they vary from plain, pale, lime green; to pale green with dark green blotches; to light gray with light green blotches; to light gray with dark gray blotches, all in a single frog. Color varies with temperature, humidity and mood, but not background color. It can change over an hour or so but not instantly like a chameleon. I have seen populations of this frog in North Carolina and Michigan, individuals of which were always light gray with dark gray blotches, never green.

There are two kinds of gray treefrogs: the eastern gray treefrog, *Hyla versicolor*, which has four sets of chromosomes, and the Cope's gray treefrog, *Hyla chrysoscelis*, which has the normal two sets. The ranges of these two species overlap throughout much of the eastern United States. In fact, the two species sometimes inhabit the same breeding pond. The visible differences between two are subtle. Cope's gray treefrogs are smaller, males averaging 3 to 4 cm in snout–vent length compared to 4 to 5 cm in the eastern gray. Cope's have smoother skin and are usually entirely green without blotches when calling. The markings of easterns are often outlined in black. Unfortunately character overlap prevents positive identification based on physical features only. The frogs in this pond demonstrate those overlapping characteristics. They are small, but some are smooth skinned and others are covered with tiny bumps. They usually exhibit dark green blotches, sometimes

outlined in black, on either a light green or light gray background when calling.

One way to positively identify a gray treefrog is by the speed of the trills in the call. Cope's gray treefrogs have faster, harsher, more nasal trills with 41 to 71 pulses per second, while eastern grays are more musical at 14 to 29 pulses per second. Because call rates are affected by temperature, you either need to tape the calls and measure trill rates or they have to be calling side by side to differentiate between the two. The frogs in this chorus all sounded the same to me; that is they were all of one species rather than a mixed population. However, with nothing with which to compare, I couldn't begin to tell if the trills were faster or slower. The other way to differentiate the two species is by laboratory analysis of a blood smear. Neither method is practical in the field.

There have been few reports showing differences in the natural history and behavior of these two overlapping species. It is unlikely that two similar and therefore competing species could successfully occupy the same ecological niche. They probably utilize different microhabitats, feeding methods, diet or periods of activity.

I wonder if the local population is different—Cope's—than the ones I saw in the other states—which were definitely eastern—but I guess I'll never know unless someone with more expertise than I examines this group. When we were expecting our first child, the physician asked if we wanted to know its gender before the actual birth. We declined. I feel the same about my treefrog pond. I'm just happy to accept and appreciate whatever Nature offers me. For me, it's enough to see and hear them and know they're still there after all these years.

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# Turtles Anyone?

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Eventually people find out I keep reptiles. The first thing they ask is "What kind of reptiles do you have?" My reply is "Thirty turtles." This always gets a wide-eyed, open-mouthed response. The next question is "Where did you get them?" The good news is I got most of them for free from people who didn't or couldn't take care of them. Half of these turtles I got through the Chicago Herp Society adoption program.

In the early '70s I made a vow to learn how to raise and keep those little five-and-ten store turtles alive. With millions being sold for as long as I had been around, I was amazed to find out how little was known about them at all, let alone how to keep them alive. Those cute little "dwarf" chelonians were actually newly hatched babies. Like all baby creatures they were fragile, sensitive creatures with very special needs. Not necessarily hard to supply, these needs were just overlooked out of ignorance. Even with all my research and efforts, getting them to live more than a few months was hard. Imagine all the four- to nine-year-olds who suffered the heartbreak of watching their pets turn soft and puffy-eyed in their little plastic palm tree dishes.

In 1972 the government put an end to all this turtle genocide. The food and drug folks stepped in and claimed they found the culprit to all the salmonella attacks in the U.S. It was those baby turtles! To this day you never see turtles under four inches for sale in a department store or pet shop. This regulation also put an end to my research and turtle nursing days.

Of course we now know that everything carries salmonella. Chickens, countertops and cats are soaked in it, but we still see millions of kittens sold and cuddled. Wash your hands!

We also witnessed the invention of full-spectrum lighting, under-tank heaters, reptile vitamins, Trout Chow and other marvelous products that have made turtle keeping possible for the masses. If that isn't enough, we now have great books and magazines as references. Working in the pet business, it always amazes me how many people want a pet but don't want to read about how to keep it. You can even get reptile keeping advice on the computer if you're too lazy to go to the library or local bookstore–coffee shop.

In the late '80s a friend called and said his cousin's kids were tired of their pet turtle. He wanted to know if I could take it. I had just moved back to Chicago and had no reptiles. Since a 30-gallon tank was included, I took it. It was a beautiful female western painted turtle. Ten years later she's doing fine.

About a month later another friend called and said he was forced to move to smaller quarters and had to find a good home for his pair of retired painted turtles. These two had been used as racing turtles at a local bar. They had been well cared for but were going to be released into the wilds of Chicago since their racing days had come to an end. My friend had kept them for seven years in a nice, heated, plastic utility tub. One was a male midland painted; the other a female southern painted. Thank goodness they weren't released into Lincoln Park Lagoon. Both turtles are doing fine and are in their twentieth year of captivity.

A few years later I moved into a large apartment with a heated enclosed back room off the porch. I had worked in a pet store and been a docent at Lincoln Park Zoo. In those few years I was shocked at how many unwanted reptiles there were in Chicago. At that time there was an article about the adoption program in the *Bulletin*. I had the space and 20 years of reptile-keeping experience so I spread the word and let it be known I'd adopt turtles until I ran out of space. I've been doing it ever since.

Personally, I think turtles are the hardiest in captivity of all herps. The turtles most frequently encountered as captives are the box turtles, both eastern and western species. I currently have three subspecies of eastern boxes: *Terrapene c. carolina*, *T. c. triunguis* and *T. c. major*, as well as a herd of ornates.

Then there are the aquatics. This category is dominated by the painted turtles and the red-eared slider. I have all subspecies of painteds except the eastern painted.

All these animals have a few basic needs that anyone should be able to supply.

First you need a container to house them. Turtles need as much space as you can supply. Although long, low glass aquariums, 20-gallon-long or larger, are great display tanks they tend to be heavy when cleaning and expensive if you're buying a new large tank. Taking a cue from the snake people, there are a lot of large, lightweight plastic containers out there that are affordable. My preference are the black plastic utility tubs used for mixing cement, available at hardware or container stores. These are two by three feet and made of heavy, durable plastic. This is a good size to hold a few average sized adults.

All turtles, tortoises and terrapins need heat. The best way to give it to them is with an incandescent basking light. Clamp-on metal fixtures are the easiest to use and come by. Even my mud, musk and sideneck turtles like to come out of the water to bask. For aquatics the light should be over a haul-out area where the animals can dry out. For the semi-terrestrials or tortoises the light should hang over one end of the enclosure. Twelve hours a day seems to do the trick.

What about full-spectrum lighting? After 28 years of keeping adult turtles (some I now own have been raised for 20 years under incandescent light only), I'd have to say you don't need it. If you're trying to raise hatchlings, encourage breeding or cure puffy eyes, I think full-spectrum light is a must. If you want to use such lighting, it certainly won't hurt. Lincoln Park Zoo uses at least four 48-inch bulbs in all their enclosures. I've seen no difference between adult animals I've kept with full-spectrum light and those without. These are fluorescent lights and do not give off much heat. You still need an incandescent light or some other external source of heat.

If you're keeping tropical exotics, you may need to supplement your heat with a hot spot at night. Under-tank pad or strip heaters are readily available. If you give your domestics (boxes or sliders) 12 hours of incandescent light, no additional night heat is needed, unless you live in a freezer.

Aquatic turtles need clean water. There are great, compact, submersible filters that will help keep *some* waste out of the water. But even with the best filtration, you still need to change all the water at least every two weeks. At least once a week without. Land-based species need their bedding, whether natural or newspaper, changed every week. You don't have to walk them four times a day, just change their surroundings when needed.

The final important thing you need is the right food for the right animal. For aquatics there are now several prepared pellets and chows. These are good basic foods that insure your captives get the vitamins they need. Sliders and painteds also love greens. Turnip, collard, dandelion, mustard and kale are inexpensive and found in bulk at most grocery stores. These guys also need lots of calcium for proper shell growth. Plaster of Paris blocks can be made in old egg cartons, dried, and placed in the water.

Box turtles are omnivorous. They eat both veggies and meat. In fact, hard-to-coax eaters will usually come to life when offered crickets or nightcrawlers. Also red and orange fruits and berries seem to be a favorite. Offer these turtles as wide a variety as you can of both meat and plants. If you have trouble finding live food at your local pet shop, don't forget the bait shop. With all foods for land turtles a powdered calcium supplement should be added.

Other valuable tips are described in detail in various books. The Barrons and Herpetocultural Library series are the most accurate and are readily available at pet and book stores. If you're serious about keeping turtles, read as much as you can about them *before* you get one.

Now, where to get that turtle. The best source to find a turtle is the Chicago Herpetological Society. All the animals I've gotten through adoption have been healthy, well kept animals. These are the best animals to keep. They're already eating and adapted to captivity. You also have a chance to talk to the owner and find out that particular animal's preferences and needs.

Most turtles coming through the pet trade are wild caught. Because of the four-inch law it's not profitable to raise hatchlings to the legal size. Wild-caught animals may have parasites or refuse to eat when brought into captivity. The journey from capture to distributors' warehouses to pet shops to home puts a great deal of stress on these animals. In most cases proper acclimation, quarantine and feeding are nonexistent. Getting an animal that has already beaten the system and adjusted to captive life is much more rewarding.

Last, if you're wondering what kind of turtles are out there needing a good home other than sliders, painted and box, here's a brief look at my second-hand collection:

- A nice "male" mud turtle (*Kinosternon subrubrum*) that laid two eggs a year after I got "him." I had never really checked.
- Two captive-born and -raised African sidenecks (*Pelusios subniger*).
- A beautiful female chicken turtle (*Deirochelys reticularia*) that was being kept without a basking area and suffering from shell rot. After two months of Betadine treatment and full-spectrum light she fully recovered and is doing fine.
- A Chinese green box turtle (*Cuora chriskarannarum*) found behind a furnace. It was surviving in a dry 10-gallon tank, blackened by months of neglect. He now shares a space with the chicken turtle and a yellowbelly slider (*Trachemys s. scripta*).

Well, I need to go now. It's tank cleaning day. I hope if you're thinking of getting a hardy, easy to keep pet that gets to know you, you'll think about a turtle. And if the day comes that you absolutely have to get rid of it, *don't* turn it loose. Put it up for adoption.

# Remembrances of ReptileFest '99

## by Gary Kostka

**If you build it, they will come . . .**

Arriving at Northeastern Illinois University's P.E. Center at 5:30 P.M. on Friday, April 30, I enter the building accompanied by my 12-year-old son John. My overloaded '88 Jeep Cherokee sits just outside, hunkered down in its illegal parking spot as if trying to avoid the eyes of campus security. Unfamiliar with our surroundings, John and I anxiously search about for a four-wheeled hand truck. We'll need it to transport the considerable quantity of gear from my sagging vehicle to this edifice of athletic endeavor that will serve as our home for the greater part of the next 54 hours.

No, we haven't come here to train for the triathlon (although there will be times during the course of the upcoming weekend when it feels as if we're doing just that!) We've come to help transform an ordinary gymnasium within this facility into a herpetocultural Wonderland. That's right. We're here to take part in the set-up of ReptileFest '99.

Our mission this evening is to construct an enclosure for Steve Quint's mammoth Burmese python along with a three-sided barricade that will partially surround Jim Nesci and his seven-foot American alligator, Bubba. We'll also be setting up our own display as well as assisting show coordinators Lori King and Gary Fogel in whatever ways they may deem necessary.

To accomplish our first objective, we'll use modular panels, the same type used to construct office cubicles. Each panel is three-foot by three-foot and weighs somewhere between 40 and 50 pounds. The two structures will require a total of 13 panels in all. I can almost here the old Jeep heave a sigh of relief as I heft the first seven onto the cart that my son has procured.

We fall into a line of other CHS members and vendors headed into the building, confident that they will lead us to our final destination, the site of ReptileFest '99. I'm reminded of the machinations of a colony of leaf-cutting ants as we proceed onward in single file while another column of 'Fest participants wheeling empty carts passes us by, headed in the opposite direction.

As John and I enter the gym, we encounter the usual beehive of activity inherent to the set-up process of a show the size of ReptileFest. However, my attention is immediately captured by a fierce, looming visage located just inside the entrance. You might guess that it was 'Fest coordinator Gary Fogel, but you'd be mistaken. In fact, it was a life-size model of the skull of a dinosaur known as *Carcharodontosaurus*. Lacking any formal training in paleontology, it was still readily apparent to me to me that this animal had been a superb predator in its time (judging from the lethal look of its dentition), and probably had a lock on the top spot in its particular food chain.

A "fleshed-out" model of *Carcharodontosaurus*'s head has been wheeled into the gym by the time I return with my second load of gear. It's equal in proportion to the first model, but depicts the animal as it may have appeared in life. Each of the models is approximately seven feet in length and handsomely detailed. They're sensational, and I know they'll create an unforgettable impression on visitors as they enter the 'Fest over the course of the next two days.

These magnificent models have been provided by world renowned paleontologist Paul Sereno of the University of Chicago. Paul has been very prominent in the media as of late because of the discovery of a new type of spinosaurid dinosaur known as *Suchomimus*. This fish-eating predator whose name means "crocodile mimic" was discovered by a Sereno-led expedition to Niger in 1997. Announcement of the new species was made by Paul and his team on November 12, 1998.

Paul Sereno, along with educator Gabrielle Lyon from University of Illinois/Chicago are co-founders of an educational program known as Project Exploration. Developed in December 1998, Project Exploration's intended purpose is to make dinosaur discoveries accessible to the public. Their three educational objectives are: 1) Provide innovative, hands-on dinosaur and natural science experiences to city kids. 2) Involve students and teachers directly with scientists and research. 3) Stimulate interest in science in student populations that are under-represented in paleontology and natural science professions. These goals are realized through Project Exploration's partnerships with various museums, libraries and educational facilities in the greater Chicago area as well as their association with the National Geographic Society.

The visiting public and CHS members both will have the opportunity of experiencing Project Exploration's dynamic approach to education at Paul Sereno and Gabrielle Lyon's fascinating exhibit. Along with the thrill of viewing the magnificent *Carcharodontosaurus* models a variety of fossils will be on display and available for hands-on inspection. All this plus the chance to learn what it's like discovering the remains of these ancient creatures from one of the world's foremost paleontologists will certainly cause quite a stir at this year's 'Fest.

John and I begin the arduous task of constructing the python pen as Gary Fogel labors away nearby, intently absorbed in the creation of an exhibit, which he calls "Dinorama." Dinorama, Gary's homage to injection-molded plastic, includes a mind-boggling array of *objets dino*. There's a huge assortment (probably a hundred or more) of toy dinosaurs in every size, shape and color imaginable. There's a dinosaur table lamp, dinosaur posters and a pterodactyl circling overhead that is so cleverly powered as to cause one to wonder just how it is able to fly.

The display is enormous, covering half the rear wall of the gymnasium, which Gary has painstakingly covered with numerous teal-colored plastic tablecloths. It's certain to bring a smile to the face of every kid and any adult with half an ounce of kid left in them. It serves as the perfect, whimsical counterpoint to Project Exploration's exhibit and is in keeping with

this year's unofficial 'Fest theme, which spotlights the ancestral ties between dinosaurs and present-day herps.

With the construction of the python enclosure nearly complete, my son and I have somehow managed to avoid coming to blows. We pause for a moment to fortify ourselves with copious quantities of the pizza that CHS president Audrey Vanderlinden has procured to help sustain the efforts of the set-up work force.

As I contentedly munch away, I notice a commotion at the northeast entrance to the gym. The father-and-son team of Bob and Dan Bavirsha has just wrestled a 12-foot, semirigid, plastic swimming pool through an average sized doorway and is now rolling it to its final location at their exhibit site. As they begin filling the pool with water, it appears to me that Bob intends to allow either his caiman, snapping turtles or both to swim freely about in this impromptu, indoor pond.

Curiosity compelling me, I amble over to the work in progress, intent on ascertaining the method to Bob's madness. I soon learn that he plans to don a pair of waders and enter the pool in order to conduct presentations on the natural history and husbandry aspects of his reptilian charges as they swim about him.

Now if you've ever had the pleasure of hearing Bob extol the fine qualities of the animals with which he works, you already know he's a consummate showman. He's a certified crowd pleaser and a fantastic ambassador for the CHS. But this time he's truly outdone himself, raising the exhibit ingenuity bar up several notches in the process. Watching these critters cruising about in their aquatic domain while receiving the benefits of Bob's expert commentary will surely prove compelling and enlightening for the throngs of visitors certain to gather there.

I leave Bavirsha's Aqua World and head back to begin setting up my own display, which now seems rather meager in comparison. On my way I'm intercepted by a gracious young man who asks me if I am in need of any help. I thank him for his kind offer, inform him that I've got things fairly well under control and he proceeds on his way.

Now, I know most of the local members of the CHS by face and I'm sure I've never seen this fellow before. I flag down Lori King during one of her endless supervisory orbits of the set-up proceedings and ask her as to the identity of this roving, would-be assistant.

"He's with a group of six volunteers from the Shedd Aquarium who've been here all day helping us set up," she responds. Further conversation reveals that this beneficent sextet has provided an invaluable service to the CHS by skirting all the 'Fest display tables, hanging signage and lending their capable hands to any member or vendor in need of assistance. The good-natured team is here at the behest of CHS member Jenny Picciola, who is also an employee of the Shedd.

Jenny has also used her Shedd connection to secure the services of a team of electricians from McWilliams Electric. These three guys have generously volunteered their time and talents so that the considerable electrical requirements of ReptileFest will be met. The high quality of their workmanship is reflected in the professional looking, extensive network of cables and distribution boxes (on loan from Intelligent Lighting Solutions) they've installed. Anyone with a need for power won't have to look far for an available outlet at this year's 'Fest.

Our pizza break over, John and I pick up where we left off and complete our remaining construction duties along with the set-up of our own exhibit. On the lookout for additional projects to tackle, we run into Ron Humbert who is prowling the aisles, caught up in the task of determining the final locations for each of the exhibitors and vendors who'll be taking part in ReptileFest '99.

Ron's looking somewhat harried, but he manages to pause for a few moments to chat. We decide that it would be beneficial if the printed cards describing each of the species to be shown at the 'Fest were sorted and placed at the appropriate tables, thereby sparing exhibitors the time and effort of locating them on their own tomorrow.

Now this might sound like a relatively easy assignment, but sixty-plus exhibitors each displaying an average of three to six animals and some as many as 20 makes for quite an assortment of cards. The five-inch stack of cards was in no particular order and first had to be separated into smaller stacks representing snakes, lizards, amphibians, turtles and crocodilians. Each of these stacks were then sorted into subgroups. For example, snakes were broken down into boas, pythons and colubrids and lizards into iguanids, geckos, skinks, chameleons etc. I'm sure you can follow the logic.

We then made the rounds of the venue, dropping off the appropriate cards at each exhibitor's location after referring to each of their applications in order to determine which animals they'd be showing. If all this sounds a bit complicated, it was, and it took nearly three hours to accomplish. Although this might have been due to the fact that it was getting late, and the working relationship between my son and me had begun to wear a bit thin.

At one point, Ron admonished "You boys had better behave or I'll have to separate you," when he happened upon us as we engaged in a verbal sparring match. At any rate, this prolonged exercise of sorting and distributing the many cards made it abundantly clear to John and me that this year's 'Fest would be bigger than ever in the areas of member participation and number of animals exhibited.

At 11:00 P.M., we bade farewell to the last remaining workers and walked out into the warm spring night. It struck me at this moment that this has always been one of my favorite parts of every ReptileFest with which I've been involved. It's that brief window of time following set-up, but before the crowds arrive, when you bask in the glow of a job well done and dream of what may be.

Unless the weather's nice.

We're back at the gym at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday. The weather outside is gorgeous. Sunshine and mid-70s. We hope

it won't have a negative effect on the 'Fest's drawing power.

After placing our snakes into their enclosures, my son and I venture off to socialize and check out the other exhibits in the hour or so remaining until the opening of ReptileFest. Mike Dloogatch, playing the role of The Angel of Mercy, is headed on a Starbucks run. He stops us just long enough to take our order. I opt for plain ol' black coffee, but John (being only 12 and as yet unconvinced of the brew's fine qualities) declines altogether.

We stroll leisurely around the perimeter of the gym, pausing along the way to inspect the wares of some of the vendors who'll be taking part in this year's 'Fest. Anything and everything related to herps is available.

Looking for something in a rubber snake or a herp refrigerator magnet? Talk to Jack Schoenfelder at the Reptiques table or Jenny Picciola at the Shedd Aquarium's table. Long to build up your herpetological library? Stop by and check out Theresa Moran's or Bob Ashley's great selections of books and periodicals. Decorating the estate? Why not consider purchasing some of Karen Bell's breathtaking ceramic herp sculptures or Jim Rowan's spectacular herp photos. Short on husbandry supplies? Timberline and Reptile Emporium are on hand to cater to your needs. Whatever's on your herpetological shopping list, odds are good you'll be able to find it at ReptileFest.

Mike returns with the java and after receiving my ration, I return to my own exhibit as visitors are now beginning to come through the door. John in turn heads for the photo booth, where he'll spend most of the day there performing a well choreographed ballet with Jenny Vollman, Bob Hilger and Ben Entwistle. They'll be taking souvenir snapshots of 'Fest attendees as they pose with a large boa or python. They've worked together so many times that each knows the moves of the others and they function like a well oiled machine.

This year's elaborate photo background is so impressive that it appears as if it had been lifted from the set of an Indiana Jones movie. It looks like the ruins of an ancient Mayan temple, complete with crumbling stone columns and walls partially covered by creeping jungle vines. Heck, I'd like to have my picture taken in front of such a fantastic background even if I wasn't holding a giant constrictor. Once again, the CHS owes the Bavirsha boys, Bob and Dan, a huge debt of gratitude, for it is they who have obtained, transported and assembled this eye-popping attraction.

The opening hours of Saturday's show produce a steady stream of visitors, but nothing like the crowds we had hoped for. It seems as if the atypical sunshine and warmth of this first day in May has Chicagoans more interested in becoming reacquainted with their Frisbees than in spending time indoors at the Midwest's greatest herp extravaganza.

It's a tad slow at my own exhibit, so I glance over at the Humberts' display and notice that Ron is nowhere in sight. His wife Dottie is there though, and she's busier than a one-armed paperhanger. She's pulling corn snakes off of two, upright driftwood displays and dispersing them to a crowd of excited children. Sensing an opportunity to help a damsel in distress, I quickly move in and take up a position beside her to begin assisting in the distribution and re-acquisition of the serpents. It's a difficult job for one person and I'm glad to help relieve her from the stress of having to look in two different directions at once. Besides, Dottie's always fun to talk to and it's also a blast to see the expressions on the kids' faces as they handle a snake. For many of them, it's the first time in their lives.

I also have a chance to check out Ron's collection of chelonian fossils while I'm over there. Some are as old as 250 million years, but they look no different to my untrained eye (other than consisting of solid rock) than the shells of present-day tortoises. The fossils are openly displayed for close examination. They provide another nice tie-in to the 'Fest's dino/herp theme and graphically emphasize just how little tortoises have changed over the millennia.

I bump into Lori King as I'm returning to my display. She looks like an air traffic controller as she walks around the show, sporting a headset/walkie-talkie combo, which she uses to maintain contact with other 'Fest principals. She's surprisingly upbeat considering the day's light attendance and I ask her why. "WGN is coming this afternoon to videotape a segment for tonight's news," she responds. "That should give us a boost for tomorrow." She's also pleased by the positive reaction she's received from the visitors she's talked to so far. I have to concur. Everyone I've seen seems to be enjoying themselves immensely.

**The Comeback Trail**

Another gorgeous day on Sunday. Rats! Two beautiful weekend days in early May in Chicago. Who'd a thunk it? Oh well, . . . the show must go on.

As John and I enter the gym shortly after 8:00 A.M., we're greeted by the sight of CHS members and their animals gathered in a tight group as a television camera crew nearby busily goes about the business of prepping their equipment. Bob Petty, well known feature reporter for Chicago's ABC affiliate, WLS, is about to go on the air with a live remote from ReptileFest to be aired on the station's Sunday morning news and local events program.

The three-minute segment features Bob Petty chatting with a BEAMING Lori King about the particulars of ReptileFest. Gabrielle Lyon is also featured in the piece as she talks to Bob about the fabulous *Carcharodontosaurus* models and Project Exploration's new association with the CHS and ReptileFest. As all this goes on, the camera pans to reveal several CHS members holding a variety of herps.

Jim Nesci's also on with Bubba the alligator. Now if there ever was such a thing as a crowd magnet, it's Jim's loveable 'gator. And it just so happens that Bubba's toothy grin is now filling the screens of thousands of potential 'Fest customers considering what they might do on this beautiful Sunday in Chicago. Things are looking up.

WGN's coverage on last night's news coupled with Bob

Petty's live report this morning give ReptileFest '99 just the shot in the arm it needs. Throngs of visitors begin to arrive as soon as the show opens and continue to pour in throughout the day. Yesterday's lack of attendance is soon forgotten as exhibitors and vendors scramble to accommodate the crowds of guests eager to experience the magic of ReptileFest.

Children flock to the turtle pen perhaps to hold a friendly box turtle, or simply to observe the comical interactions between the numerous tortoises within. The Spitzers, Steve and Jan, and their kids Eric and Jennifer take turns overseeing the action at this chelonian corral, ensuring that no harm comes to the shell-backed occupants within.

'Fest visitors with herp health issues on their minds can seek the professional advice of DVMs Byron DeLaNavarre, John Bruederle or Steve Barten, who all do stints at this year's "Ask the Vet" exhibit. I'm proud to say that each of these gentlemen are members of the CHS. They graciously donate their time and knowledge at ReptileFest year after year to the benefit of the Society and the general public.

If the thought of a career in veterinary medicine intrigues you, you need only visit the booth of the University of Illinois Vet School to learn more about it from the capable and friendly group of students posted there.

The Chicago Academy of Sciences is at the 'Fest for the second year running, once again promoting their eagerly anticipated Nature Museum, scheduled to open in October of this year. Christine Smiskol gives interested visitors a preview of the exciting things they can look forward to experiencing when the new facility opens its doors this autumn. Thanks to Kathleen Berg of the CAS for the part she played in having the Academy participate in ReptileFest '99. The CAS and CHS share a common goal of increasing the public's awareness and understanding of the natural world. Hopefully, the two groups can continue to work together in the coming years in order to better achieve this.

Other Midwestern herp societies including groups from Minnesota, Michigan and Indiana are also represented at this year's ReptileFest. They help give the event a broader geographical appeal as they enlighten visitors and CHS members on the herpetological issues of concern in their own regions. The folks from the Minnesota Herp Society have put together an eye-catching educational display, which includes a variety of animals and a multimedia learning station covering their own special interest group known as Tortoise Trust.

I spend the greater part of this hectic Sunday assisting Jenny Vollman and my son at the Mayan temple photo booth. What should be a four-person operation is now down to three, as Ben Entwistle is off videotaping the 'Fest for a public access cable station. John more than capably takes over the photographic responsibilities as Jenny and I wrangle the snake, collect fees and answer a multitude of onlookers' questions. The three of us are kept hopping by the constant stream of customers eager to take home a special memento of their adventure at ReptileFest. By day's end, I've gained a clear perspective on the exhausting mental and physical aspects of photo booth duty. I vow to myself that I must make a concerted effort to avoid it in the future.

Things must be nutty at the temporary tattoo booth as well, judging from the nonstop parade of skin art that passes before my eyes all day long. Don Wheeler somehow managed to handle the popular attraction's artistic workload alone on Saturday. Fortunately, he's got a talented assistant today in the person of Ellin Beltz, who's helping him decorate a continual onslaught of arms, legs and cheeks. Don't get any ideas. . . . I'm referring to the cheeks on people's faces. It was nice to have the chance to take a few minutes off from the rigors of the photo booth to chat with Ellin and catch up on some of the goings-on in her life.

ReptileFest '99 ends all too quickly. Lori King and Gary Fogel are absolutely delighted with the outcome, and deservedly so. They both sweated blood over the course of the last nine months putting it together, and it showed. ReptileFest '99 has been spectacular in every way, with bigger and more elaborate exhibits, increased member and vendor participation, greater involvement of groups outside the CHS and a stronger emphasis on education. What's more, Gary (who also serves as CHS Treasurer) can now slumber peacefully, secure in the knowledge that today's banner crowds have almost certainly put the show into the black.

Thanks, Lor and Gar, from the entire CHS. You've absolutely outdone yourselves. And thanks to all those who participated in ReptileFest '99 and made it such a fabulous success.

The Shedd team consisted of Shannon Nelson, Dave Juarez, Eileen Semeniuk, Nellie Gianni, Debbie Schwarz and Patrick Liu. Thanks, guys, for a job well done.

The McWilliams Electric team consisted of Daniel Furse, Michael Hudson and Mike Knight. Thanks, guys, for allowing the "force" to be with us at ReptileFest '99.

*Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 34(7):182-183, 1999*

# HerPET-POURRI

by Ellin Beltz

**In memoriam**

Last week arrived the sad news that Sherman Minton had passed away. Besides being a wonderful husband (to Madge) and father of two non-herpetological offspring, Dr. Minton was a prominent herpetologist and professor emeritus at the Indiana University School of Medicine, Department of Microbiology and Immunology. Sherman and Madge traveled the world with their daughters and recorded some of their experiences and much herpetological lore in their books *Giant Reptiles* and *Venomous Reptiles*. I know several colleagues who refer their early interest in herps to the Mintons' books. I read *Giant Reptiles* on vacation in Block Island when I was a child. All the kids in the hotel then went out reptile hunting—but we didn't find much. That fall, I borrowed *Venomous Reptiles* from the New York Public Library and was fascinated all over again. Years and years later when I met the Mintons at a CHS meeting, I asked them to sign my really beat-up copy of *Giant Reptiles*, and told them how much the book had meant to me when I was a child. Both Sherman and Madge smiled at this remark; they remembered their own girls—all grown up now—but children then. I was fortunate to meet Sherman and Madge many times since, at SSAR meetings, at an amphibian conference and at regional meetings. They were always so kind and so encouraging to newer people. They would sit with the Bechtels if all were at the same meeting; rather quietly - unless the boys were talking herps. Then it could get fast and furious. One time, at dinner, Sherman and Madge and Ken and I were talking about feeding snakes. We were having a lively discussion of fuzzies and hoppers, pinkies and pinky pumps. Then I overheard a woman at an adjoining table say, "They look so normal, but they're talking about RATS!" Perhaps my favorite memories of the Mintons is from one meeting several years ago. They sat next to each other as always, shoulders just touching. Every time Sherman looked over at Madge he smiled gently; later he took her hand and held it for quite a while. I saw their love in their eyes, in their hands. A love which had withstood innumerable years, two children, careers and experiences from the Great Depression, through World War II, the Cold War and the Internet. And through it all, they smiled—for each other and for us. We'll miss you, Sherman. Thank you for everything.

**Yet more awful news**

A few days ago I got an internet post that the former editor of *Vivarium* magazine, who for years oversaw my columns, was awaiting a heart transplant in California. While I had never actually met Sean, we had long and often heated phone conversations about editing changes and limits—so I have heard him in all moods and all times by phone before. He is a famous and prominent herpetological author, herp curator and so much etc. that I'd hesitate to even try a biography from memory. But, in brief, one of those people that one admires for their accomplishments and their lasting influence on our avocation.

Last night I had an incredibly poignant conversation with Sean McKeown. Apparently his troubles with his heart started years ago when a cold or flu virus attacked his heart muscle and a gradual loss of activity followed. At first it responded to diet and medication and he thought he would have years before major problems. But last fall his heart failed and he was hospitalized, waiting for a heart transplant.

Hearts must be matched to the recipient by blood type, height and weight. In December, Stanford received an O+, 6-foot, 190-pound heart and prepped Sean for surgery. In the operating room, they found that the heart was damaged—so it was back to waiting.

In March his heart died and he was put on a left ventricular heart pump assist device. This sounded so tidy, so modern. Then he told me that they split him from breastbone to pubis and put the pump device and defibrillator in his chest, and input/output tubes and electrical connections out the other side of his chest and now he lives with a machine going "tick-tick-tick" 24 hours a day. At least he can move for a few minutes and take some of this off to sleep.

Because of all his equipment, he needs to stay near Stanford. The one time he tried to go home, he had to be flown by Medevac helicopter back to the Bay Area because the hospital in Los Osos could not help him. So he and his wife Wendy rented a low-end month-to-month apartment in Palo Alto. At first, their daughter Dorie stayed in high school in Los Osos, but as the waiting game went into multiple months, they felt it was better to bring her to Palo Alto, too. Their apartment complex does not permit pets, so their cats are alone at home with one of Dorie's friends taking care of them. Wendy is on leave from her science teaching job assisting in managing all the technical equipment that keeps Sean alive—but that means her pay is cut because they dock her for what her substitute costs.

Up until the federal government changed the rules in February, Sean was a 1A for a transplant. Now he is a 1B. The only O+, 6′, 190 lb heart that came into Stanford in 1999 was successfully installed in a man who had been on the machines six months and was in imminent danger of dying. That man's doing great, now—so Sean keeps hoping for his heart and selling everything he owns, a lifetime of effort, to try to keep his house while paying mortgage, rent, double utilities and taxes and uncovered medical bills at Stanford. His friends have established a fund to try to help him have a home to go home to after he gets his heart. Or, as he pointed out, for Wendy and Dorie to go home to if he does not get a heart in time.

I asked him what could we do. The first thing he asked for was for all herpetologists to sign their organ donor cards to relieve the suffering of others. He said he would be happy to talk to people on the phone. He used to take 20 calls a day from other herpetologists and people wanting information about reptiles and amphibians and he says he misses it very much.

He said he would like some recent herpetological journals and

regional newsletters as he misses reading up on what has been his life's work. His address is 1520 Sand Hill Road, #301, Palo Alto, CA 94305.

He said the idea of a fund has been very hard on his pride—but he sees no other way of making ends meet if this wait goes on for even another month. You can contact his fundraising friends at <ForSean@hawaii.rr.com> or drop a check to "Sean McKeown Special Fund," Attn: Beverly, Bank of America, Los Osos Branch #1710, 1076 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos, CA 93402.

And I would ask you to pray, wish, hope or chant to the powers which sustain you that we could all have Sean's quiet dignity when faced with a catastrophe so complete. And that Sean gets his heart.

***Quo vadis?***

• The May 20 *Washington Post* reports that scientists have discovered that pollen from genetically altered corn poses a threat to the monarch butterfly. Genes from a bacteria known as Bt were transferred into the corn. Insects eating the corn died and so less pesticides were needed on the crop. At first this looked like a great solution, but then somebody noticed that corn pollen blows around the fields a lot. Altered corn pollen which fell onto milkweed plants killed nearly half of the monarch butterfly larvae on those milkweeds. Altered corn is now 25 percent of the total U.S. corn crop and the corn belt is along the monarch's migration route from their overwintering site in Mexico. Illegal logging of that forest also threatens the species. [*GreenLines*, May 20, 1999 from Greg Clouser]

• Prince Charles of England is refusing calls from Prime Minister Tony Blair to shut down his website, featuring "vigorous denunciations" of genetically modified crops, which he says result in "sterile fields offering little or no food or shelter to wildlife." See <http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk>. [*GreenLines*, June 4, 1999, from Roger Featherstone] The Prince was also the sponsor of the First World Congress of Herpetology held in Canterbury, England, an astonishing ten years ago.

**Like father, like son**

"The Sea Turtle Restoration Project and Help Endangered Animals–Ridley Turtles (HEART) placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times* on June 23 urging Texas Governor George W. Bush to create a marine reserve around Padre Island to protect endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles from shrimp trawling. So far activists say Bush has dodged their inquiries by referring them to state fisheries officials 'whose primary responsibility is to protect the shrimp fishery.' The National Academy of Sciences found that shrimp trawling kills more sea turtles than all other human activities combined." [*GreenLines*, June 28, 1999, from Roger Featherstone]

**Readers share new websites**

While we didn't get as many of these as we did to begin with, here are this month's latest suggestions for reptile and amphibian websites.

• "Lizard Man of Matobo" at <http://www.grand-illusions.com/lizard.htm>. From James N. Stuart.

• "Malaysian Guilty of Snake Torture" at <http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=2559230929-5b2>. From Bob Cihak, by E-mail. [Editor's note: This article no longer seems to be there, but it is an intriguing headline.]

• Macau has lifted its ban on importing turtles and the trade will resume. The city had banned turtle imports after finding some mainland Chinese turtles contained cholera. Read all about it at <http://www.scmp.com/News/HongKong/Article/FullText_asp_ArticleID-19990619012>. From Wes and Kim von Papineäu by E-mail. [Editor's note: This article has now been archived by the *South China Morning Post*. You'll have to search for it, and it will cost you HongKong $10 to download the full text.]

• A new version of a reptile data base has been posted at <www.embl-heidelberg.de/~uetz/LivingReptiles.html>. Please contact Peter Uetz <uetz@u.washington.edu/uetz/> if you find any errors, omissions or broken links. [From J. N. Stuart, via E-mail] The posting from U. Wash. neglected to say what their acronym meant, so I have omitted it. Also, please read this site with caution. Since the post contained significant typos; one assumes that the site will also have mistakes.

• A grade-school student won a science fair with a report on the dangers of dihydrogen monoxide. It's posted on <http://www.snopes.com/toxins/dhmo.htm>. Eloise Beltz-Decker, by E-mail.

**Thanks to everyone who contributed this month,** you will be seeing a regular, clipping-format column next month. I have found that there is a "critical mass" of material needed to build a good column—so please contribute any reptile and amphibian clippings you may find in your local papers, magazines and web site addresses. Send whole pages of newspaper or magazines with the date/publication slug firmly attached and your name on each page to: Ellin Beltz, 1647 N. Clybourn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614-5507. Letters only by E-mail: <ebeltz@ripco.com>.

*Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 34(7):184-185, 1999*

# Herpetology 1999

In this column the editorial staff presents short abstracts of herpetological articles we have found of interest. This is not an attempt to summarize all of the research papers being published; it is an attempt to increase the reader's awareness of what herpetologists have been doing and publishing. The editor assumes full responsibility for any errors or misleading statements.

## SALAMANDER ABUNDANCES

M. C. Grover [1998, J. Herpetology 32(4):489-497] evaluated how the abundances of two species of forest-dwelling plethodontid salamanders, *Plethodon cinereus* and *P. glutinosus*, are related to moisture level and availability of cover by manipulating moisture levels and cover object density on experimental plots. He also investigated how cover and moisture influence the physical condition and activity level of the more common of the two species, *P. cinereus*. The experiment was a 2 × 2 factorial design in which plots had either low or high densities of cover objects (rocks, logs, and coarse woody debris) and were either watered by sprinklers two to three times weekly or received no supplemental watering. Nocturnal searches of the plots revealed that watering increased the abundance of juvenile *P. cinereus* and increased the activity levels of both juveniles and adults. Increased densities of cover objects resulted in increased abundance of both adult and juvenile *P. cinereus*. *Plethodon glutinosus* was more abundant on watered plots and on plots with high densities of cover objects than on unwatered plots and plots with low densities of cover objects. The *P. cinereus* on plots with high densities of cover objects were of higher mass, adjusted for body length and tail length, than conspecifics on plots with low densities of cover objects. This suggests that the foraging success of terrestrial salamanders is dependent on cover object availability. The findings of this study indicate that moisture levels and cover object availability are both significant factors in regulating abundances of terrestrial salamanders, but that different species and different age-classes of the same species can vary in their responses to these factors.

## TADPOLE PREDATION BY TURTLE HATCHLINGS

M.-O. Rödel [1999, Amphibia–Reptilia 20(2):173-183] conducted experiments with hatchlings of *Pelomedusa subrufa*, a widespread African freshwater turtle, which showed that this species consumed large quantities of tadpoles. Tadpoles preyed upon, comprised between 0.05 and 21.55% of the turtle's biomass. The experiments demonstrated that *Pelomedusa subrufa* was neither gape limited nor did it ignore very small prey. Tadpoles with an ovoid body shape (*Hemisus marmoratus*, *Hyperolius nitidulus*, *Ptychadena maccarthyensis*), which shared, under natural conditions, the pond bottom microhabitat with the turtles, were more threatened than the robust tall-finned *Kassina* tadpoles that lived in the middle of the water column. The translucent, slow swimming *Phrynomantis microps* tadpole occurred in larger ponds and preferred the upper water column in deeper parts of the pond. This species was especially at risk in ponds with reduced water levels. Turtles, in contrast to fish or dragonfly larvae, are capable of migrating to other ponds. They therefore might have a profound regional influence on tadpole communities in ephemeral savanna ponds.

## FOREST CANOPIES AND AMPHIBIAN BREEDING PONDS

E. E. Werner and K. S. Glennemeier [1999, Copeia (1):1-12] examine the influence of forest canopy cover on the breeding pond distributions of wood frogs (*Rana sylvatica*), leopard frogs (*R. pipiens*) and American toads (*Bufo americanus*). Survey results indicate that wood frogs bred in both open- and closed-canopy ponds, whereas leopard frogs and toads did not. The authors conducted two experiments in 1.5-$m^2$ cages set in natural ponds to evaluate species' performance in open- and closed-canopy ponds. The first experiment was conducted in two open-canopy and two closed-canopy ponds and demonstrated that tadpole growth and survivorship for all three species were higher in open-canopy ponds. Wood frogs, however, also grew and survived well in closed-canopy ponds, whereas performance of leopard frogs and toads was very poor in closed-canopy ponds. Competition between species was asymmetrical; wood frogs affected leopard frogs, but the reverse effect was negligible. The second experiment was conducted m the two closed-canopy ponds with wood frogs and leopard frogs and indicated that food supplementation dramatically increased both survivorship and growth rate of leopard frogs. There was no effect of food addition on wood frog survivorship and a minimal effect on growth rate. Resource differences between open- and closed-canopy ponds therefore appear to have a strong influence on distributions of these species. Dissolved oxygen concentrations also were lower in closed- than in open-canopy ponds, which may interact with resource levels to influence species performance. Finally, the authors note the potentially widespread and important influence of forest and pond succession on the distribution of amphibian species.

## WINTER AGGREGATION IN TREE LIZARDS

B. E. O. Elfström and N. Zucker [1999, J. Herpetology 33(2): 240-248] note that winter aggregations have been shown to occur in wild and laboratory populations of some species of lizards. The tree lizard, *Urosaurus ornatus*, was observed in experimental conspecific aggregations during the winter season. It was postulated that these aggregations occur because of limited over-wintering areas, and/or limited access to areas better suited for thermoregulation. The social system of *U. ornatus* has been well studied. These studies, however, have been restricted to the spring/summer activity season and shed little light on any social interactions that may occur during the over-wintering period. This study showed that in semi-natural enclosures where suitable over-wintering areas were not limited, *U. ornatus* formed aggregate groups. It was shown that this species preferentially forms winter aggregations in south-facing crevices as opposed to north-facing ones. Neither summertime social status nor sex of individual lizards had a bearing on their location within a given aggregation.

## HAWKSBILL POPULATION STRUCTURE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Y. M. León and C. E. Diez [1999, Chelonian Cons. and Biol. 3(2):230-236] report that a foraging hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) population in the southwestern Dominican Republic, at Jaragua National Park and Cabo Rojo, was predominantly composed of juveniles and subadults with a sex ratio heavily skewed towards females (2.71:1). The population showed specific site fidelity and highly variable growth rates. The lack of adult hawksbill turtles in the area (even during the reproductive season) is noteworthy. The high density of immature turtles (up to 96.8 turtles/km$^2$) encourage the authors to believe that these juvenile hawksbills, if protected, may successfully repopulate previously depleted areas.

## REPRODUCTION IN THE SPOTTED POND TURTLE

D. Basu and S. P. Singh [1998, Hamadryad 23(2):157-161] studied the reproduction of the spotted pond turtle, *Geoclemys hamiltonii*, in captivity at Kukrail, Uttar Pradesh, India. Courtship observed in February and March comprised males mounting and biting the back of the head and neck of females. Nesting was observed in April and May. Five clutches of eggs were obtained, clutch size varying between 13 and 24. Incubation period ranged from 32 to 48 days. *G. hamiltonii* exhibits great variation in its nesting season in different parts of its range.

## THE *MABUYA QUINQUETAENIATA* COMPLEX IN EAST AFRICA

D. G. Broadley and A. M. Bauer [1998, African J. Herpetology 47(2):43-58] examined much of the available material of the *Mabuya quinquetaeniata* complex from south of Latitude 5°N and east of Longitude 25°E. The authors reinstate *Mabuya margaritifera* (Peters) as a full species, sympatric with *M. quinquetaeniata* (Lichtenstein) in southeastern Kenya. *Mabuya pulcherrima* De Witte is recognized as a full species in the Shaba Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## A CRITICALLY ENDANGERED NEW DWARF TOAD SPECIES

J. C. Poynton et al. [1998, African J. Herpetology 47(2): 59-67] describe *Nectophrynoides asperginis*, a new species of this genus of Tanzanian ovoviviparous dwarf toads, from the Kihansi River Gorge in the Udzungwa Mountains, and provide a key to the genus. The new species, currently known only from small patches of spray-dependent wetland vegetation associated with Kihansi Gorge waterfalls, is probably the most vulnerable member of this genus on account of the Lower Kihansi Hydropower Project which is due to go online in 1999. This project will significantly reduce the river flow into the gorge and consequently the amount of spray that maintains a unique plant and animal community. Measures are suggested for improving chances of long-term survival of the species.


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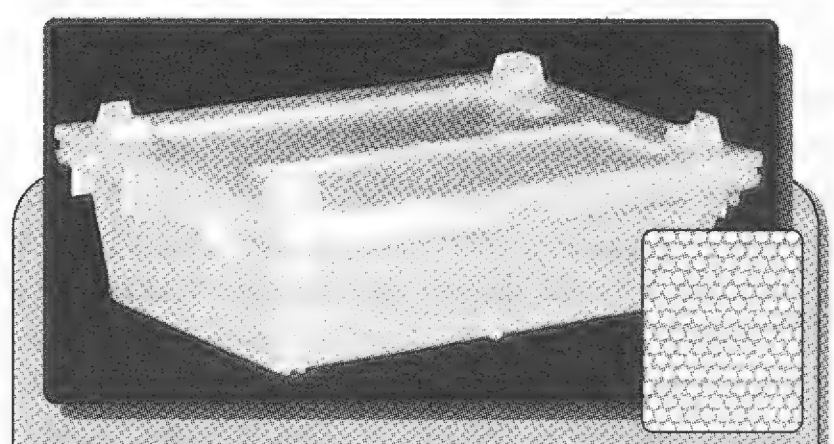

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# Unofficial Minutes of the CHS Board Meeting, June 25, 1999

The meeting was called to order at 7:55 P.M. Board members Greg Brim, Gino Martinez and Steve Spitzer were absent.

**Officers' and Committee Reports**

The minutes of the May Board of Directors meeting were read, corrected and accepted.

The Treasurer's report was read and accepted.

Monthly programs: A suggestion was made to invite Bill McMahon of the Louisville Zoo to speak about Cuban crocodiles. Jack Schoenfelder plans to hand out grab bags of toys for kids 12 and under at the annual Show and Tell June 30. And if these children come up front and speak about their animal, they will also receive a $5.00 gift certificate.

Library: Jennie Picciola reported that the library usage has greatly increased.

Shows: The CHS will be represented at the Great Lakes Reptile and Amphibian Expo on Sunday, July 11. A Reptile-Fest wrap-up meeting will be held July 17 at Jennie Picciola's.

CHS activities: Audrey Vanderlinden expressed thanks to the Louisville Zoo staff for the great tour that they provided for our CHS members. The CHS picnic ("Herpnic") will take place on August 22 at the Catherine Chevalier Woods; a sign-up sheet for grills will be posted. Lisa Koester will chair the games and there will be piñatas. It was reported that the parasitology class was a full house and was very beneficial. Mike suggested the Toledo Zoo for next year's zoo trip.
Grants Committee: Recipients of the 1999 CHS grants, as listed in the June *Bulletin*, were Allison Abell, Mary Katherine Colbert, Daniel Fogell, Daniel Warner, Timothy Brophy, Gordon Thurow, and Robert Zappalorti. An additional $250.00 was requested by the committee for Mary Katherine Colbert's rattlesnake proposal. Mike Dloogatch moved to grant this proposal the additional funds, Jennie seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Adoptions: It was reported that a 4′ Asian water monitor is available. A videotape of an iguana was sent to Jennie Picciola with hope that someone will adopt it. Two newts and assorted herp-related are also available from the family of ex-CHS member Hollis Baker, who passed away recently. As usual, there are plenty of iguanas up for adoption.

Raffle: The CHS has seen an increase in merchandise donated to the monthly raffle. It was agreed that requests for such donations should specify that they be mailed to the CHS address at the Academy rather to any individual member's home address.

**Old Business**

The nominating committee for the next election of officers and members-at-large is being formed. Karen Bielski and Don Wheeler consented to serve on the committee and three non-board members need to be named.

After an emotional discussion, it was decided that Marcia Rybak, ex-president of the CHS now residing in California, will take over the administration and maintenance of the CHS website.

**New Business**

Audrey Vanderlinden reported that Jack Schoenfelder plans to make the CHS tax returns available for public viewing on our website and will include the last three years.

**Round Table**

Lori King-Nava received a call from Paul Sereno, who needed a green iguana for a *National Geographic* photo shoot. She suggested Jennie Picciola's Juice, "the Fabio of male green iguanas." We look forward to seeing the results.

Mike Dloogatch informed the board that Sean McKeown, a long-time CHS member, is awaiting a heart transplant. His condition is very complicated and Mike suggested that the CHS send him the monthly *Bulletin* to read.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

*Respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Karen Bielski*

## Answers to Herp-Acrostic #16

The quotation was taken from page 39 of *Horned Lizards* by Jane Manaster:
"Mexicans have two names for the horned lizard: *camaleón* (literally 'chameleon') and the more appealing *torito de la Virgen*, the 'Virgin's little bull.' …Texans are more prosaic, and John Strecker wrote, 'This well-known reptile is commonly called Horntoad, Horned Toad and Horned Frog.'"

A. Jararaca
B. Afrânio do Amaral
C. New Mexico
D. Elephant's foot
E. Metallic
F. Adderwort
G. Northern
H. Alytes
I. Sangamon
J. Tethered
K. Endor
L. Red-spotted
M. Hawksbill
N. Octoploid
O. Rhinoceros
P. Nekton
Q. Elaphine
R. Devil's tongue
S. Levell
T. Inch the Inchworm
U. Zimmermann
V. All-or-nothing
W. River dog
X. Dextral
Y. Shelley

# Advertisements

**American Federation of Herpetoculturists**: A nonprofit national membership organization of herpetoculturists, veterinarians, academicians and zoo personnel involved in the captive husbandry and propagation of amphibians and reptiles. Membership includes highly acclaimed magazine, *The Vivarium*, dedicated to dissemination of information on herpetocultural accomplishments, herp medicine, breeding and maintenance, field studies and adventures, enclosure design and much more. AFH membership is $26. Send information requests to: AFH-News, P.O. Box 300067, Escondido CA 92030-0067.

Attention: **New regional herpetological study group affiliate to form.** The formation of a Redwood Region Herpetological Affiliate (Society) is proposed by local area herpetologists. Anyone interested in the herpetological taxa inhabiting the Redwood Coastal Belt of the northern Pacific coastal regions of North America is cordially invited to join. A formational meeting is proposed to be conducted at the Humboldt State University campus, Arcata, California, in June 1999. Please contact Bradford Norman through: BRN, c/o Redwood Region Herpetological Affiliate (Society), 69 Midway Court, Arcata CA 95521, or call (707) 445-8252 or (707) 442-5977.

For sale: rats and mice—pinkies, fuzzies and adults. Quantity discounts. Please send a SASE for pricelist or call Bill Brant, *THE GOURMET RODENT*, 6115 SW 137th Avenue, Archer FL 32618, (352) 495-9024, E-mail <GrmtRodent@aol.com>.

For sale: murine-pathogen-free rats and mice available in all sizes, live or frozen: pinkies, fuzzies, crawlers, small, medium and large. Frozen crawler mice in lots of 2000, $.17 each. Also available, full grown hairless mice. FOB shipping point. Master Card accepted. Call (518) 537-2000 between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. or write SAS Corporation, 273 Hover Avenue, Germantown NY 12526 for prices and additional information.

For sale: from **The Mouse Factory**, producing superior quality, frozen feeder mice and rats. New prices, new sizes, and now rats! Our mice and rats are vacuum-packed to greatly extend freezer life by reducing freezer burning and preserving vitamin and nutrient content. We feed our colony a nutrtionally balanced diet of rodent chow, formulated especially for us, and four types of natural whole grains and seeds. Mice: pinkies, $.25; fuzzies, $.30; hoppers, $.35; weanling, $.40; adult, $.45. Rats: starting with pinks at $.40 each, to XL at $1.80 each. Discount prices available. We accept Visa, MC, Discover or money orders. P.O. Box 85, Alpine TX 79831. Call us toll-free at (800) 720-0076 or visit our web site <www.themousefactory.com>.

For sale: from Bayou Rodents, excellent quality feeder mice and rats. Every size available. Pinks starting at $20/100. Orders are shipped by overnight service Monday thru Thursday. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. For more info, contact Rhonda or Peggy, (800) 722-6102.

For sale: **high quality frozen feeders**. Over a decade of production and supply. Seven sizes of mice availabe: small newborn pinks up to jumbo adults. Prices start at $25 per 100. Feeders are separate in the resealable bag, not frozen together. Low shipping rates. Free price list. Kelly Haller, 4236 SE 25th Street, Topeka KS 66605, (913) 234-3358 evenings and weekends.

For sale: Herp bags—colors vary, translucent ripcord nylon, super lightweight, extremely durable construction with hot corners sewn in, double seamed. Custom sizes made upon request. Sizes: 46" × 14", $7 each; 24" × 12", $6 each; 24" × 6", $5 each. Shipping fees, $1 for first bag, $.30 each additional bag. Nicole Lechowicz, 2511 S. Illinois Avenue, #104, Carbondale IL 62901, (618) 457-2783.

For sale: Australia herp books. Wilson and Knowles - *Australia's Reptiles*, 1989 (1988), 447 pp., 846 color photos—a photographic reference to the terrestrial reptiles of Australia, hardbound, DJ, as new cond., $100; Gow - *Graeme Gow's Complete Guide to Australian Snakes*, 1993 (1989), 171 pp., many color photos; hardbound, DJ, $45; Frauca, Harry - *Encounters with Animals*, 1963, 152 pp., 130 b & w photos—author's personal experiences (34 pp. on reptiles), hardbound, DJ, $35; Hunt, Helen - *The Puffin Book of Australian Reptiles*, 1988, 73 pp., 24 color and many b & w photos and drawings—children's book, softbound, $15; Worrell, Eric - *Dangerous Snakes of Australia and New Guinea*, 1961, 68 pp., b & w photos, plastic covers, $15. All in very good to excellent condition except as noted. Prices postpaid for orders of $30 or more, others $2.50 for postage. William R. Turner, 7395 S. Downing Circle West, Littleton, CO 80122, (303) 795-5128

For sale: c.b. geckos. One male *Rhacodactylus chahoua*, nice colors and pattern, perfect shape, $800; one male and one female *Rhacodactylus auriculatus*, adult breeders, normal banded pattern with pink color scales, have laid two clutches this year, $475/pair; two male and five female *Stenodactylus doriae*, breeding group, similar in shape and size to *Teratoscincus microlepis*, but with small white spots over the back, all in perfect shape, $45 each or $300/group. This year's c.b. offspring available now: *Rhacodactylus auriculatus* (European bloodlines), $125 each; *Bavayia cyclura*, $65 each; *Oedura monilis* (high yellow phase), $75 each; *Geckolepis typica*, $35 each; *Teratoscincus roborowski*, little butterballs!, $95 each; *Palmatogecko rangei*, several bloodlines, $150 each; *Teratolepis fasciata*, nice patterns, $95 each; *Phelsuma madagscariensis boehmei*, rare, very colorful, $75 each; *Phelsuma standingi*, adult breeding female bright blue!, $70 each. Send SASE for current 1999 stock list. Philip Tremper, P.O. Box 264, Clintonville WI 54929, (715) 823-5873 phone/fax. E-mail: <geckoandco@hotmail.com>. Check out our new website at www.kingsnake.com/philtremper.

For sale: frilled lizards, sexed ¾ Australians for the same price you will pay for New Guinea animals. Any Australian bloodlines have larger frills and more color than New Guinea animals. I will also be offering pure Australian animals from several bloodlines and the spectacular red phase. The Northern Territory red Australians have the largest frills and the most color. Their frills have color all over, with two large 3-inch snow white patches on either side. Call or E-mail for prices and availability. Photos available of Northern Territory reds. Also, one c.b. emerald tree boa, one year old, a lot of white. Ed Marino, (410) 557-9197. E-mail: <e.w.marino@worldnet.att.net>. [MD]

For sale: ocelot, fat-tailed and leopard geckos, $25 each; Okeetee corn snakes, $20 each; red-footed tortoises, $100 each (10 or more, $90 each, 20 or more, $80 each). Linda, (918) 342-2159, call before 10 P.M. Central Time. [OK]

For sale: baby bearded dragons; baby Kenyan sand boas; baby javelin sand boas; one subadult female javelin sand boa. Scott, (630) 483-7670.

For sale: one male and one female *Cyclura*, $550; one male and two female adult gray-banded kingsnakes, $300; one male and one female Honduran milksnakes, $175; three leopard tortoises, $300/all. Leo, (773) 284-8799.

For sale: yearling argus monitor, $175; albino eastern kingsnake (*Lampropeltis g. getula*), $300; yearling black-tailed cribo, $200; young, red, Colombian boa, $50; assorted sizes, colors, sexes Mali uromastyx, LTC, $60–75; yearling Moroccan uromastyx, $125; LTC male chuckwalla, $60; two adult male locality rosy boas, $50 and $75. Mike Malawy, (630) 717-9955 evenings and weekends, E-mail: <mike@herpworld.com>.

For sale: Now accepting reservations for the following 1999 expected offspring. **Snow plains garter** (*Thamnophis radix*), this will be the first year that these are produced and will be very limited numbers, $225–300 each; **double hetero plains garter** (anerythristic × albino), statistically offspring will include albino, anerythristic, snow, heteros and normals, $175 each; **anerythristic plains garter**, dark black with gray dorsal stripe and blue venter (two possible bloodlines), $100–125 each; **albino plains garter**, classic lavender/white, similar to California king, $125–150 each; **possible hetero plains**, these will be offspring of the albino × anerythristic cross, possibly hetero for albino, anerythristic and snow, $30 each; **Blais red eastern garter** (*T. s. sirtalis*), photos in *Vivarium*, Vol. 9, No. 6, pp. 12-13, these are gorgeous, varying degrees of high red markings and sure to be popular, $50–125 each; **double hetero Blais red eastern × albino Florida**, this will produce a stunning, robust red albino and will be extremely popular for years to come, $95 each; **melanistic eastern garter**, classic midnight black with white chin, copy of permit provided upon request, $25 each; **hetero anerythristic red-sided** (*T. s. parietalis*), exciting, one-of-a-kind new morph, charcoal black with gray dorsal stripe and white fleckings throughout body, $100 each. **All of my garter snakes eat mice and it is generally easy to convert babies to rodents**. For reservations, contact Scott Felzer, (919) 934-0110 Eastern Time or E-mail: <sirtalis01@aol.com>. [NC]

# Advertisements (cont'd)

For sale: c.b. **Vietnamese blue beauties**, unrelated bloodlines, $500/pair; c.b. **Amazon tree boas**, $50–200; **Sawu pythons**, adult pair, $450. Mike, (708) 385-0543. Chicagoland area. E-mail: <Boakingdom@aol.com>.

For sale: **Adults:** male het ghost, $60; black king, $55; male *thayeri* (milksnake phase), $100; pair of ball pythons, $175/pair; Indonesian bluetongue, $55; *Rhacodactylus auriculatus*, c.b. '98, $150; *Phelsuma madagascariensis grandis*, c.b. '98, $20. Flexwatt heat tape, $2.50/ft, $5 each connection. Steve Bostwick (515) 274-4580, E-mail <liasis@juno.com>. [IA]

For sale: Great snakes, great service. Send SASE for list. Applegate, P.O. Box 338, Campo CA 91906, (619) 478-5123. E-mail: <applesnake@juno.com>. Website: <www.applegatereptiles.com> Thank you, call me.

For sale: **1999 prospective hatchlings**: Baird's ratsnakes, $15 each; prairie kingsnakes, $15 each; California kingsnakes, $20 each; speckled kingsnakes, $15 each; albino speckled kingsnakes, $25 each; Mexican black kingsnakes, $30 each; red milksnakes, $30 each; Sinaloan milksnakes, $35 each; Pueblan milksnakes, $35 each; Mexican milksnakes, $40 each; Queretaro or Ruthven's kingsnakes, $50 each; Nuevo Léon kingsnakes (*thayeri*), $65 each; gray-banded kingsnakes, $50 each; Durango mountain kingsnakes (*greeri*), $75 each; Arizona mountain kingsnakes, $125 each; prairie/speckled crosses, $20 each. **Breeders, available May–June:** one male and one female Baird's ratsnakes, $100; one male and one female *annulata*, $200; one male and two female prairie kings, $135; one male and one female albino speckled kings, $150; one male and one female Mexican black kings, $175; one male and three female red milksnakes, $250; two female Sinaloan milksnakes, $175; one male and two female Pueblan milksnakes, $250; one male and one female Ruthven's kingsnakes, $250; one male and one female Nuevo Léon kingsnakes (*thayeri*), $250; one male and two female Durango mountain kingsnakes, $300; one male and one female *mexicana mexicana*, $135; two male and two female prairie/speckled crosses, $85/pair; one male and two female California kings, $150. Steve Mitchener, (405) 748-6566 after 6:00 P.M. Central Time. [OK]

For sale: two male and one female c.b. '96 Kenyan sand boas, $250; one male and one female c.b. '97 rough-scaled sand boas, $150; one male and three female c.b. '89 Hog Island boas, Sears strain, proven breeders, $1000; one male and two female c.b. '89 Brazilian rainbow boas, proven breeders, $500; one male and three female c.b .'97 Brazilian rainbow boas, unrelated litter picks, $500; one male and one female c.b. '98 Dumeril's boas, unrelated litter picks, $700; one male and one female c.b. '97 Dumeril's boas, $700; one male and two female c.b. '96 jungle carpet pythons, exceptional, $1000; c.b. hypomelanistic fox snakes, ivory with light beige pattern, $500 ea. Mark Wendling, (319) 857-4787. [IA]

For sale: **Argentine boa babies!** Gorgeous, healthy, feeding. From exceptional parents. Also available **northern blue tongue skink babies!** Very vigorous, eating. From colorful parents. And do we have the **bullsnakes! Snows, hypomelanistic, albino**, you name it, we have the morph! They are eating us out of house and home! Call Jim at (414) 654-6303.

For sale: jungle carpet pythons. 4½–5' male, great feeder, jet black and bright yellow, proven breeder, $350; 3', 2-year-old male, "Lazik" bloodline, awesome color, $250; 8-month-old female, choice, held back from last year, perfect specimen, vertebral stripe, great eater, $175. Mark Petros, Strictly Serpents, (847) 854-3259 home, (847) 854-2992 work.

For sale: Send SASE to CRC, P.O. Box 0731, Las Vegas NV 89125-0731 for brochures and list of species available. Limited bookings available for guided tours of herpetological collection sites in Nevada. Call/fax (702) 450-0065. URL <http://www.herp.com/crc/> E-mail <crcsafetie@aol.com>.

Tours: Adventure tours to Madagascar! Join **Bill Love** seeing and photographing fauna and flora, heavily herp-biased, across the world's least known mini-continent. Maximum fun & photo ops assured on every trip. Contact him at: BLUE CHAMELEON VENTURES, P.O. Box 643, Alva FL 33920. TEL: (941) 728-2390, FAX: (941) 728-3276, E-MAIL: <blove@cyberstreet.com>.

Tours: **Road-riding in Costa Rica!** Treat yourself to the trip of a lifetime! Learn about tropical herps, find them, photograph them, see where they live. **Greentracks, Inc.**, offers the best herpetological tours led by internationally acclaimed herpetologists and herpetoculturists. See the Amazon, visit cloud forests, experience the world's greatest rainforest, super sunsets and good company. Call (800) 9-MONKEY.

Video: *Rattlesnake Hunting*, a 60-minute video by a 30-year veteran collector. Don't miss this one! It's as close to being in the field as you can get. (Not a slick commercial production.) Send check or money order for $19.95 plus $3 postage & handling to: D. Wheeler, 2705 Sunset Trail, Riverwoods IL 60015. Allow 4–6 weeks for delivery.

Wanted: Northwest side Chicago, 4 rm (prefer 2 bdrm) apt. or small house, **near** grocery store and CTA, **needed** by nonsmoking, 20-year CHS member, 2 old cats and healthy, long-owned herps. References from current landlord available. Please help me keep my critters together. Janice, (708) 484-7307.

Wanted: Any information about flying snakes (*Chrysopelea*), including natural history, care and anecdotes. I'm conducting research on their flight at the University of Chicago. Jake Socha, (773) 324-4010, E-mail: <jjsocha@midway.uchicago.edu>.

Wanted: aberrant/unusual garter snakes. Scott Felzer, (919) 934-0110. [NC]

Wanted: big-headed turtles; mata mata turtles; Mexican giant mud turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*); exceptionally large common snappers (45 lbs. & up); large alligator snappers (over 90 lbs.); spectacled caiman from Trinidad, Tobago and Surinam; dwarf caiman; smooth-fronted caiman; albino turtles (except red-eared sliders). Walt Loose, (610) 926-6028, 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. or after 11:30 P.M. Eastern Time.

Line ads in this publication are run free for CHS members — $2 per line for nonmembers. Any ad may be refused at the discretion of the Editor. Submit ads to: Michael Dloogatch, 6048 N. Lawndale Avenue, Chicago IL 60659, (773) 588-0728 evening telephone, (312) 782-2868 fax, E-mail <MADadder0@aol.com>.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Chicago Herpetological Society will be held at 7:30 P.M., Wednesday, July 28, at the Field Museum of Natural History, Roosevelt Road at Lake Shore Drive, in Chicago. **Dr. David Chiszar**, Professor of Psychology at the University of Colorado, will be the featured speaker. Dr. Chiszar's program will cover his ongoing studies on the predatory behavior of viperid snakes. And as a bonus he will bring a display of coins that picture reptiles and amphibians. Dr. Chiszar is a wonderful speaker with the ability to take a serious scientific subject and bring it to life in a way that will capture your imagination. Try not to miss this program.

We are required to use the entrance on the west side of the museum. **We are allowed to use the free parking lot to the west of the museum. Entrance to this lot is from McFetridge Drive, the wide street just to the south, between the museum and Soldier Field.** Public transportation is an option: the Roosevelt Road (12th Street) bus goes directly to the museum, thus providing a connection with the el and subway. This bus service runs until 11 P.M.

### The Chicago Turtle Club

The Chicago Turtle Club will meet on Sunday, July 25, 1:00 – 3:30/4:00 P.M., at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago. Meetings are informal. Questions, children and animals are welcome. Parking is free and there is no admission. For more information call Lisa, (773) 508-0034 or visit the CTC web site: <http://www.geocities.com/~chicagoturtle>.

## 1999 CHS PICNIC

This summer we are once again holding a CHS Picnic. The date is Sunday, August 22, and the location is the Catherine Chevalier Woods out near O'Hare Airport at East River Road/Dee Road and Bryn Mawr Avenue (exit the Kennedy Expressway at Cumberland, go south to Bryn Mawr, then west to East River Road). The action will start at Noon and last until everyone goes home. The CHS will provide grills and sodas/soft drinks; you bring your own food. We'll have the usual assortment of games and activities planned for kids and adults. For more details, call Mike Dloogatch, (773) 588-0728.

## MOVING??

Please let us know in plenty of time of any change in your mailing address. The *Bulletin of the Chicago Herpetological Society* is sent to our U.S. members by bulk-rate third class mail. This means that the U.S. Post Office will not forward your *Bulletin* with the rest of your mail. This is so even if you make a special request that your magazines be forwarded (such a request only applies to second class mail).

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